



NEWS RELEASE

#04-275

Date: Thursday, December 16, 2004
District: District 8 – Inland Empire
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SR-18 AT ARCTIC CIRCLE REOPENS

San Bernardino - The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will reopen SR-18 on Friday, **December 17 by 3 p.m.** The portion of Route 18 between Snow Valley and the Big Bear Dam was closed on a daily basis since November 8 to remove dead and dying trees along the portion known as the "Arctic Circle".

The Arctic Circle Project was lead by the United States Department of Agriculture, Forestry Service with support from Caltrans and the Natural Resources Conservation Corps (NRCS). The purpose of the project was to reduce hazardous (falling) trees and reduce the potential of falling debris onto the highway, thus reducing a threat to the public who travel that road.

The San Bernardino National Forest has removed 360 acres of dead and dying trees. This tree removal effort may be resumed next spring 2005, as funding becomes available. This project would not have been so successful without the support, patience and collaboration of the Big Bear Valley, Arrowbear and Running Springs communities and the Mountain Area Safety Taskforce (MAST) members.

State Route 18 will remain open as promised to accommodate the rest of the holiday season. Closures will only be allowed in the case of an emergency. All mountain routes are open and will remain open unless inclement weather becomes a factor.

Caltrans reminds travelers destined for the mountain resorts and communities to use caution when driving on the highway. Please allow extra time to reach your destination as traffic may be heavier than usual. Be courteous to other drivers and aware of the speed limit. If you plan to travel to mountain resorts, please listen to local stations for weather conditions and possible chain requirements. You may also look at the District webmap at www.dot.ca.gov/dist8 under road conditions for the latest road information. Drive Safe and Happy Holidays.

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